DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 302 312 JC 890 039

TITLE Special Programs for Minority Students at Illinois Community Colleges.
INSTITUTION Illinois Community Coll. Board, Springfield.
PUB DATE Jan 89
NOTE 12p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; *Access to Education; Affirmative Action; *Community Colleges; Equal Education; *Minority Groups; Program Descriptions; Program Development; *School Holding Power; Statewide Planning; Student Personnel Services; *Student Recruitment; Two Year Colleges; *Two Year College Students
IDENTIFIERS *Illinois

ABSTRACT

Since the enactment of state legislation designed to address the underrepresentation of minorities, women, and the handicapped, Illinois institutions of higher education have developed many programs to address this problem. These efforts include a range of approaches from those focusing primarily on motivating students and strengthening their academic skills to those involving minority families and the local community. Several features are incorporated in these programs in varying degrees: (1) the programs involve regular college faculty; (2) they create a positive, academic environment through mentoring and peer counseling; (3) they depend on a positive relationship between the college and minority community; (4) they emphasize continuous collaboration with elementary/secondary schools and four-year institutions; (5) they receive support and promotion from college leadership; and (6) they are organized as a unit in order to provide a package of services and activities needed by minority students. Since community colleges provide access to the majority of Black and Hispanic students enrolling in higher education in Illinois, it is critical that these colleges develop and implement programs designed to enhance student participation, retention, and success. The report includes brief descriptions of 13 minority programs, including efforts focusing on career development, science enrichment, parent training, mentoring and support, student recruitment, and transfer articulation. (AJL)

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January 1989

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Illinois Community College Board

SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR MINORITY STUDENTS AT ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Community colleges provide access to higher education for a substantial number of minority students. In Illinois, 60 percent of all black and 68 percent of all Hispanic students enrolled in undergraduate education in the fall of 1987 attended community colleges. As a result, community colleges need to be at the forefront in providing programs designed to increase the access, retention, and success of minority students in higher education. The purpose of this report is to provide assistance to Illinois community colleges in developing or improving programs for minority students by providing examples of minority programs currently operating at Illinois community colleges and by describing the most successful features of these programs.

Over the past several years, the concerns regarding access and achievement of minority students in higher education institutions have increased throughout the nation. Nationally, the percentage of black and Hispanic high school graduates going on to college has declined from 33.5 and 35.8 percent, respectively, in 1976 to 26.1 and 26.9 percent in 1985 (Minorities in Higher Education, American Council on Education, 1987). The percentages of black and Hispanic students enrolling in and completing each successive level of education from elementary to graduate school decline much more dramatically than for non-minority students. The statistics for Illinois show similar trends.

Educational associations such as the American Council on Education (ACE), the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC), the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO), and many others have issued reports and/or initiated special projects designed to alert the educational institutions about these trends. These reports received serious attention from the large private endowments that fund educational initiatives. Many of these endowments provided funding for pilot programs at educational institutions designed to increase the enrollment and success of minority students in higher education.

In response to these concerns, higher education institutions across the country have implemented special initiatives and programs to address the recruitment, retention, and success of minority students. Many of these special programs have been designed to serve minority students who are underprepared academically, lack positive self-image and motivation, and are at risk of either dropping out of school or being dismissed because of poor academic performance. They frequently provide pre-college experiences to assist students in realizing the benefits of higher education and in making the transition from elementary to succeeding levels of education by strengthening study skills as well as the basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. Several of these special programs have incorporated the mentoring concept to provide both potential and current college students with role models. Since many of these special programs for minorities were funded by the nationally known endowments as pilot or demonstration projects, they have received extensive coverage in educational literature throughout the country.

In Illinois, the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) and Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) have identified the need for special programs for minority students. The IBHE has funded such programs for many years through its regular funding to colleges and universities as well as through its Higher Education Cooperation Act (HECA) grants. The ICCB has provided funding for minority programs through its Disadvantaged Student Grant program. In 1985 the Illinois Legislature enacted Public Act 84-726, which directed public higher education institutions to develop and implement strategies to increase the participation of minorities, women, and handicapped students in higher education. The Act also directed the IBHE to develop policies and procedures for monitoring the progress of higher education institutions in this effort. The results obtained from this monitoring (see Status Report on Minority, Female, and Handicapped Students Plans and Goals Implemented by Illinois Community Colleges, ICCB, January 1989) show that each community college has developed plans and goals for improving the participation and success of these three groups. As a result of this effort, some of the colleges have established special organized programs designed to serve minority students.

MINORITY PROGRAMS AT ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGES

This section describes minority programs at Illinois community colleges. These programs are ones that have been reported to the ICCB on various surveys and were specifically designed to meet the needs of minority students. These programs illustrate a variety of different approaches for increasing the participation, retention, and success of minority students in community colleges. Each description includes the name of the person at each college who can be contacted for more detailed information.

1. City Colleges of Chicago: City-Wide College - Chicago Career Beginnings Project

   The Chicago Career Beginnings Project is a cooperative effort between City-Wide College, Columbia College, public high schools in Chicago, and private business and industry. The project is designed to assist 100 minority high school students to make better career choices and to help them obtain the education needed for these careers. The project utilizes individuals from business and industry who serve as mentors for the students. These mentors provide personal attention to students and also assist them with submitting applications for college admissions and financial aid. Each mentor receives extensive instruction and ongoing support from college staff. Both colleges offer opportunities for students to participate in activities involving on-campus faculty to expose students to a college setting. In addition to providing mentors, the program also works with private businesses and industries that assist students in obtaining summer jobs designed to expose them to various career opportunities.

The Chicago Career Beginnings Project is one of 25 Career Beginnings programs that is coordinated by Brandeis University (Waltham, Massachusetts). Brandeis University provides the technical assistance to City-Wide College in operating this project. Funding is provided by several private endowments.

Contact Person: Violin Hughes, Program Coordinator
Telephone Number: (312) 368-8843

2. City Colleges of Chicago: Olive-Harvey College - Pathways Program

The Pathways Program provides individualized services to at-risk minority high school students. Services offered through the program help students to make adjustments from high school to college and include placement testing, personal and academic counseling, financial aid counseling, and assistance in course selection and registration. To recruit students, the Pathways director has established close relationships with local high schools, making at least four visits per year to each of the 18 high schools being served. The director is assisted by other college staff including the admissions officer and faculty representing specific programs. In addition to the contact with high schools, the director and program staff utilize community organizations to identify students not referred to the program through the high school.

Admission to community college transfer programs at Olive-Harvey is facilitated by the close contact with students and recommendations from high school counselors and principals. Students in the Pathways Program who eventually enroll in the college are closely monitored. While regular academic counseling is provided by counselors and faculty advisors, intensive one-on-one counseling is available for students experiencing adjustment problems. Pathway students new to the campus are matched with "partners," usually older students who have been enrolled at the college for some time and who are trained to advise their peers regarding instructional and financial aid services. Some of the students in the program have maintained exceptional grade point averages and eventually qualified for the college's honor program. The number of minority students involved in the program increased from 150 in 1986 to 373 in 1988.

Contact Person: Carolyn Palmer, Director of Community Outreach Marketing and Recruitment Program
Telephone Number: (312) 568-3700

3. Elgin Community College - Science Enrichment Program for Minority Students

Elgin Community College administers the Science Enrichment Program for Minority Students in cooperation with Illinois State University. Funded under Illinois Board of Higher Education/Higher Education Cooperation Act (IBHE/HECA), the program is designed to increase the number of minority

students in science-related fields. It provides special services to minority students in grades five through twelve that include: 1) early science motivational experiences, 2) ACT/SAT preparation, 3) information on admissions and financial aid/application, and 4) tutoring in mathematics, science, and allied health courses. In order to participate in the program, students must be recommended by their school counselors, obtain written parental consent, and write an essay describing the kinds of experiences they anticipate from the program. Activities of the program include field trips for students to various industrial and business sites employing minority professionals and Saturday morning classes taught by Elgin and Illinois State faculty.

Contact Person: Judy Jobe, Dean, Student Support Services
Telephone Number: (312) 697-1000

4. Illinois Central College - Project Opportunity

Project Opportunity is designed to encourage high school minority students to prepare for study in underrepresented fields, such as mathematics, science, and engineering. The project is funded through an IBHE/HECA grant and is a cooperative effort among Illinois Central College, Bradley University, and the Peoria Urban League. In order to participate in the project, high school students must: 1) submit three letters of recommendation from their teachers and counselors, 2) possess a 2.25 GPA on a 4.00 scale, and 3) provide a statement of commitment from their parents. The role of the Urban League is essentially to recruit students for the project and identify role models who can assist students in exploring career opportunities. Students attend classes two Saturdays a month and spend two weeks during the summer on the Bradley University campus. The Saturday sessions are primarily motivational and provide information to students about various colleges and financial aid packages. These sessions also prepare students for the ACT and/or SAT and provide them with the basic skills in time management and college survival. During the summer session, students are enrolled in mathematics and science courses taught by regular faculty from both institutions.

The project's evaluation revealed that many students, after participating, showed measurable improvements in their high school performance. Of the ten seniors involved in the project in 1986, nine are currently enrolled in college, and one is in the military.

Contact Person: Glenn Roberson, Vice President, Student Services
Telephone Number: (309) 694-5011

5. Joliet Junior College - Office of Minority and Intercultural Affairs

The Office of Minority and Intercultural Affairs (OMIA) coordinates a variety of recruitment and support services for minority students at Joliet Junior College. The Office's objectives are to facilitate minority student achievement and to promote cultural and intercultural

awareness on campus. The college's recruitment strategies incorporate a series of activities and events including: 1) publishing and distributing a campus newsletter to high school students, teachers, and administrators; 2) making presentations at meetings of high school organizations (e.g., Ethnic Teens in Action Club); 3) visiting community-based minority organizations including black and Hispanic churches; and 4) sponsoring social activities such as high school dances at the college campus. To cultivate the relationship between the college and the minority community, the director of OMIA formed the Minority Community Advisory Council comprised of community leaders, parents, and students. Meetings are held to identify problems that affect the community and campus, such as the decline of black male student participation on campus. Many council members serve as role models in recruiting and mentoring students.

OMIA also operates a program designed to enhance mathematics, science and computer skills of junior high and high school students. This is a cooperative program with the College of St. Francis and Lewis University funded by an IBHE/HECA grant. Faculty from these institutions teach courses on Saturdays during the academic year and six weeks during the summer. The college reported that students who followed the prescribed activities of the project raised their grade point averages and performed better on standardized tests. OMIA is ranked highly by students and administrators for its responsiveness and commitment to minority student needs.

Contact Person: Joelyn R. Ainley, Vice President, Student Affairs
Telephone Number: (815) 729-9020

6. Kankakee Community College - Parent Training Program

The Parent Training Program is offered in conjunction with the adult basic/adult secondary education program at Kankakee Community College. The Parent Training Program offers assistance to adult, low-income minority students in improving their parenting skills through a series of counseling sessions and home visits, and assistance to teenagers in improving parenting skills through classes and support groups. The Parent Training Program is comprised of three units: 1) the Parent Training Initiative sponsored by the Department of Children and Family Services; 2) the Child at Risk, a hotline service for parents in crisis situations; and 3) the Minnesota Early Learning Design (MELD) Young Moms, modeled after a program in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The program administrators rely heavily on video tapes that provide examples of "success stories" of minorities who have overcome economic and educational handicaps. Minority faculty and staff are heavily involved in tutoring and counseling of students. The program and transportation are provided free of charge. While the program is largely service-oriented, it has become a recruiting device for the college. Over one-half of the students who complete the program have enrolled in regular college credit courses.

Contact Person: Richard Frey, Dean of Continuing Education
Telephone Number: (815) 933-0345

7. Kishwaukee College - Spanish GED

Spanish GED provides an opportunity for Hispanic students to obtain a GED certificate utilizing their native language. It encourages students to learn English through ESL programs and eventually enroll in college-level courses. This program has several components: recruitment/admissions, retention, counseling, mentoring, and curriculum development. Class schedules and brochures are written in Spanish to attract students, and the college employs one part-time instructor/recruiter who resides in the Hispanic community.

Kishwaukee instructors serve as counselors, tutors, and mentors and have developed close relationships with their students by contacting them on a daily basis. Faculty members in the program have designed curricula and developed courses that are relevant to the Hispanic population.

Contact Person: Evelina Cichy, Dean of Adult Basic Education and Special Projects
Telephone Number: (815) 825-2086

8. Lincoln Land Community College - Project STP (Students, Teachers, Parents)

Project STP is intended to improve the mathematics skills of elementary school minority students from grades three to six. This is a cooperative program involving Sangamon State University, Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield College, Springfield School District, and the Springfield Urban League. Elementary students receive special tutoring from teacher aides who are college students at one of the participating institutions. "Math fairs" and "math bowls" are sponsored yearly. For students to participate in the program, several criteria are considered: scores on the California Achievement Test, student attitude evaluations, student classroom performances, and teacher and parent evaluations. During 1987-88 approximately 1,000 students participated in this project.

The project provides after-school workshops for elementary school teachers on the latest techniques in teaching mathematics and special sessions for parents on how to help their children with mathematics homework. A special STP handbook is distributed to each parent at the beginning session.

Contact Person: Desna Wallin, Vice President, Academic Services
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9. John A. Logan College and Shawnee College - Southern Illinois Regional Career Preparation Program

The Southern Illinois Regional Career Preparation Program assists minority students in grades five through nine in developing necessary skills that enable them to pursue college-level work. The program relies

heavily upon community centers and minority churches to help recruit minority students. Minorities in leadership roles in business, industry and education serve as role models to expose students to professional fields where minorities have historically been underrepresented. Instructional services offered through this program include mathematics, science, computer literacy, and career awareness. The program which is funded by IBHE/HECA is administered by Southern Illinois University at Carbondale in cooperation with John A. Logan College and Shawnee College.

Contact Person: Darlene York, Director of Career Development and Academic Support Center, John A. Logan College
Telephone Number: (618) 985-3741

George Floyd, Dean of Continuing Education, Shawnee College
Telephone Number: (618) 634-2242

10. John A. Logan College - Support Group Network

Support Group Network provides mentoring and support services to college minority students. Students in the program are recruited through faculty referrals; notices placed in the campus newsletter; and through activities of the Black Affairs Council, a student organization on campus. Services offered by the program include tutoring and weekly group support meetings. Minority staff serve as mentors and advisors. Academic workshop sessions are provided to assist students in monitoring their own academic progress. Faculty are made aware of the Support Group Network through their monthly meetings and are encouraged to make referrals.

Contact Person: Darlene York, Director of Career Development and Academic Support Center
Telephone Number: (618) 985-3741

11. Richland Community College - The College Futures Program and Peer Counselors Project

Richland Community College's College Futures Program is designed to expose underprepared, yet promising minority high school juniors and seniors to the benefits of higher education. The program is offered in collaboration with Sangamon State University and Partners in Education, a privately funded organization comprised of professionals in business and education. The College Futures Program provides tutoring in reading, writing, and mathematics; builds students' self-esteem; and exposes them to higher education experiences. College faculty provide one-on-one tutoring. High school students are identified by their counselors and must receive parental consent to participate in the project. A $30 per month stipend is given to each student for attending 20 hours of skills and motivational sessions. Seventeen percent of the minority students participating in the College Futures Program made the honor roll in the last quarter of the academic year.

The Peer Counselors Project enhances academic and leadership skills of high achieving minorities in the seventh and eighth grades. Students are trained to encourage their peers to attend college. Logs are kept by students on the number of times they speak to individuals or student groups on the benefits of college. Students in the project are required to write about what they learned from their experiences. College faculty provide assistance and tutoring. Of the seventh and eighth graders participating in the Peer Counselors Project, more than 88 percent have improved their grades in at least two courses.

Contact Person: Jennell Norman, Professor, Communication Division and Coordinator of College Futures
Telephone Number: (217) 875-7200

12. State Community College - Transfer Articulation Project

State Community College (SCC) is a participant in the Transfer Articulation Project, a nationwide effort of the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) to attract new populations of high school and community college graduates to UNCF colleges. SCC officials attempt to raise students' awareness of black colleges by providing them with information about and visits to UNCF colleges. Faculty members from State Community College have also visited various black colleges to gain an understanding of their programs. They then conduct lectures and seminars about UNCF colleges for interested students at their own institutions.

Contact Person: Ruth Clayborne, Dean, Student Counseling Services
Telephone Number: (618) 274-6666

13. Waubonsee Community College - Developmental Education Services Program

The Developmental Education Services Program is designed to increase minority enrollment in baccalaureate and vocational programs. Activities involve high school recruitment, academic and financial aid counseling, and tutoring. Orientation and classes are offered to high school students free of charge. Counselors, who are essentially mentors, have a close relationship with students in the program and meet with them once or twice a week to review classwork and, if necessary, discuss personal and academic problems. Adjunct faculty provide tutoring on a regular basis and are involved in periodic, in-service workshops to discuss the different needs of minority students. Counselors maintain frequent contact with faculty to monitor the academic progress of their students. The college reports that 80 percent of those students who entered the program in fiscal year 1987 have been retained at the college.

Contact Person: Richard Healy, Associate Dean, Developmental Education
Telephone Number: (312) 466-4811

FEATURES OF MINORITY PROGRAMS

The programs reviewed in this report show significant efforts by many institutions in addressing the problem of underrepresentation of minority students in higher education. These efforts include a range of approaches from those focusing primarily on motivating students and strengthening their academic skills to those involving minority families and the local community. Selected features incorporated in varying degrees in these programs are described below.

1. The program involves regular college faculty. Critical to any effort to improve minority student participation is the willingness of faculty to address the academic, social, and emotional needs of minority students. Research has shown that academic success is highest for students who experience positive faculty relations. Faculty working with minority programs should be knowledgeable about different minority cultures and minority students' preferred modes of learning. Many faculty have become sensitized to minority student needs through workshops conducted by staff of minority programs and/or through working with students as mentors or role models.

2. The program creates a positive, academic environment through mentoring and peer counseling. Academic success for many minority students is facilitated through a supportive, nurturing environment. Such an environment is created by programs utilizing peer counselors and mentors who help students focus on the areas that are necessary for continued, satisfactory academic achievement. In several programs, a concerted effort is made to match students with individuals who have been trained either by the institution or through public agencies or organizations, such as the local Urban League. Mentors may be persons outside of the educational setting, such as business and professional leaders, as well as faculty, counselors, or administrators at a college.

3. The program depends on a positive relationship between the college and minority community. Colleges that make attempts to involve the minority community and organizations in planning educational efforts designed to assist minority students more quickly gain support for these programs. Involvement of minority community leaders as advisors to special programs and eventually as role models in instructional activities communicates to the minority community the institution's commitment and priority in this area.

4. The program emphasizes continuous collaboration with elementary/secondary schools and four-year institutions. Many of the programs described in this report are aimed at raising the aspirations of minority students and strengthening their academic preparation. Collaboration with the high schools is critical in addressing the high dropout rates of minority students and in enhancing student perceptions about the benefits of higher education. There is a need for collaboration in addressing the special needs of minority students between the community colleges and the universities. This collaboration should be at all levels and should include students, faculty, and administrators.

5. The program receives support and promotion from the top leadership within the college. Whether an institution utilizes one specific approach or several, none of these will be successful without the commitment of the board of trustees and president. Top administrators must provide leadership in obtaining support of the program from community college personnel and the community. Leadership may also take the form of actual participation in the program (such as in a mentoring role) and ensuring that the program has adequate resources to achieve its objectives.

6. The program is organized as a unit which can provide a package of services and activities needed by minority students. Programs designed to serve the needs of minority students need to be responsive to the various needs of students. A concentration of various services within one unit seems to be more effective than having the same services provided by many separate offices. Programs organized as a unit are much more visible to students and faculty, and this in turn makes the programs more accessible to minority students who need the services.

CONCLUSION

Since community colleges provide access to the majority of black and Hispanic students enrolling in higher education in Illinois, it is critical that they develop and implement programs designed to enhance the participation, retention, and success of these students in higher education. Although all community colleges in Illinois have developed strategies and goals for serving minority, female, and handicapped students, many have not yet developed organized programs specifically designed to serve minority students. Community college administrators and faculty should study the educational literature about minority programs at community colleges to identify the most appropriate way of assisting minority students in their community. A review of the minority programs operating at Illinois community colleges and the features of these programs described in this report enables college officials to obtain information about minority programs operating at neighboring institutions. Since these programs are located in Illinois, college officials can easily obtain detailed information about a particular program or make arrangements to visit with the administrators of a program.

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